constituted for clearance of outstanding statutory dues of workers could not be made on account of dissolution of the previous Cabinet.

(b) and (c) Based on the discussions in the meeting of the Group of Ministers on 29th August, 1997, the Government has been making concerted efforts to liquidate outstanding statutory dues of workers. In the Union Budget for 1998-99 the Government has made an allocation of Rs. 1482 crores as non-Plan loans mainly for payment of wages and salaries to the employees of sick and convalescent PSUs.

New National Labour Policy

4354. DR. MOHAN BABU: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) the salient features of the new National Labour Policy;

(b) the measures taken to mitigate the grievances of workers in the unorganised sector; and

(c) whether Government propose to set up a second National Labour Commission for solving such workers' problem and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) Review and updation of Labour Policy is a continuous process so as to ensure its relevance to the emerging needs. However, in the context of preparation for the 9th Five Year Plan, a Working Group on Labour Policy was set up in December, 1995. The report was submitted to the Planning Commission in October, 1996 The thrust of the Labour Policy would be on consolidation and strengthening of the base created through tripartitism for maintaining industrial peace and harmony. The policy parameters include development of a labour policy in tune with the economic policy with a thrust on appropriate employment and wage policy.

(b) Most of the Labour Laws apply to workers in the organised as well as unorganised sectors. Minimum Wages Act is an important piece of social legislation meant to safeguard the interest of workers in the unorganised Sector.

Additionally, for certain categories of unorganised workers, the Government have established Welfare Funds to address concerns in areas like health, housing, social security, educational and recreational facilities etc.

To improve the working conditions of construction workers and to provide minimum social security for them, the following two laws concerning construction workers have recently been enacted:

(i) The Building and other Construction of Workers (Regulation of Employment and conditions of Service) Act, 1996.

(ii) The Building and other Construction Workers (welfare cases) Act, 1996.

(c) Labour Laws have been enacted over a period of time to address a number of issues which assumed importance and attracted pointed attention at a particular point of time. While many of these issues are of continued nature, some of these might have ceased to be of importance hence the need for review of labour policies, programmes and laws flowing from them. This question has also been discussed in the Tripartite meeting of the Standing Labour Committee and Indian Labour Conference and the Government has agreed, in principle, to have these laws reviewed by setting up a high powered body so as to ensure consistency of labour laws with the general changes taking place in the economic policy as also to provide for greater welfare of the working class.

Increasing unemployment in the country

4355. SHRI VAYALAR RAVI: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether the number of unemployment has increased in the country for the last three years; and

(b) if so, the details of State-wise increase in the Employment Exchange?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (DR. SATYANARAYAN JATIYA): (a) As per the Labour Force Surveys carried out by National Sample Survey Organisation the unemployment which was of the order of 12 million during 1987-88 has come down to 9 million in 1993-94 as per Usual Principal Status. However, the number of job-seekers,